

# CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS in California

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Davis, California

## A look at Area IV from Desert Plains to Coastal Range, Sierra Tops to Dairy Wash



NRCS Liaison Page 9



Sam Aslan, Indio District Conservationist, and Tim Burke, Associate Director of Coachella Valley RCD, evaluate cover crops at the Oasis Date Gardens.

Sam Aslan's innovative techniques for growing in a desert environment are welcomed by farmers in Coachella Valley. Aslan coordinates an annual Soil Health symposium that attracts many experts in the field to discuss solutions for farmers. Aslan is very active in the international community as well, giving tours and exchanging information with agriculturalists from all over the world.



F.A.R.M.S.  
Program  
a Success  
Page 5

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# A Message From Hank



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CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS STAFF

SPRING 2001

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**Some photos have been digitally altered.**

# California Diversity

by Paul Benedict



For the last year and a half since my return to California, I have been busy getting a handle on all the hard work being done. The Area 4 employees and our RCD partners have accomplished many goals and given me great on-the-job training.

Like most of California, Area 4's diversity of terrain, climate, animals, and plant life is incredible compared to most parts of the country. I have been fortunate to work in two other states and travel across most of this wonderful and spectacular country, but nowhere else I've seen has the diversity that we have here in Southern California. We have valleys below sea level and peaks over 14,000 feet high. Our precipitation ranges from less than 2 inches in some desert areas to 60 inches on the high slopes of Mt. San Antonio. We have desert vegetation, grasslands, brushland, hardwood and coniferous forests.

We also have cities. Big interconnected cities that stretch for miles. I am always amazed when I drive between the Riverside Area Office and the Somis field office. It's only a 100-mile drive, but it's 100 miles through the second largest urban area in the country and during rush hour it can easily take three hours to drive.

Area 4's employees serve a huge and diverse population. The new 2000 census shows that in April last year Area 4 had 19,475,637 people, or 57.5 percent of the state's population, living in 37 percent of the state's area. This included 11,071,167 White; 7,494,751 Hispanics (of all races); 1,711,640 Asians; 1,141,424 Blacks, or African Americans; 175,385

American Indians or Alaska Natives; and 60,495 Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders, and several hundred thousand people who listed their race as something else. This population is represented by 34 Congressional districts.

We have some truly dedicated resource conservation district partners that we work with here in Southern California. Our RCDs were very instrumental in getting the South Coast RC&D Area and the brand new Mojave Desert-Mountain RC&D Area authorized. They are currently working hard to see that the new Farm Bill addresses the conservation needs of California which are often quite different than other parts of the country. Many of our customers have not been eligible for incentive programs to address their soil erosion and other resource problems because their operation is either too large, not considered agricultural, or the program has technical requirements that are not possible to implement in Southern California.

I'm looking forward to the future. We have some tough challenges ahead of us, but we have some great employees and partners to tackle those challenges. I would like to encourage all California NRCS employees to seriously consider positions in Southern California as they are advertised. I remember back in the early 1980's thinking to myself that I would never take a position in Southern California. I think I was turned off by my perception of the large cities, smog and congestion. Now, in the year 2001, I'm living here with my wife and two kids and we all love it. Southern California is a great place to live and work.



# Mojave Desert-Mountain RC&D Thirty Years In The Making

By Rick Aguayo and Paul Laustsen

It took 30 years but the Mojave Desert-Mountain RC&D was one of 33 RC&D programs that received authorization early this year. On March 15, a proud RC&D Council led by President Pete Lounsbury, James Peterson representing Diane Feinstein's office, Jim Kocsis from the California State Office, and local citizens, gathered to celebrate the official opening of the RC&D.



*Jim Kocsis presents RC&D Council President Pete Lounsbury with an award denoting RC&D authorization.*

The process started in 1970, when an application for authorization was submitted to the

Secretary of Agriculture. However, the application was not approved.

"The issues that they were trying to address 30 years ago are the same issues that are being addressed now," says Rick Aguayo, Acting RC&D Coordinator. "Overdraft of groundwater, sand blow from the Mojave River, and economic development. All of these issues have caused major problems and in some instances court battles to resolve". Aguayo speculates that had the RC&D area been approved 30 years ago, these issues would have been addressed.

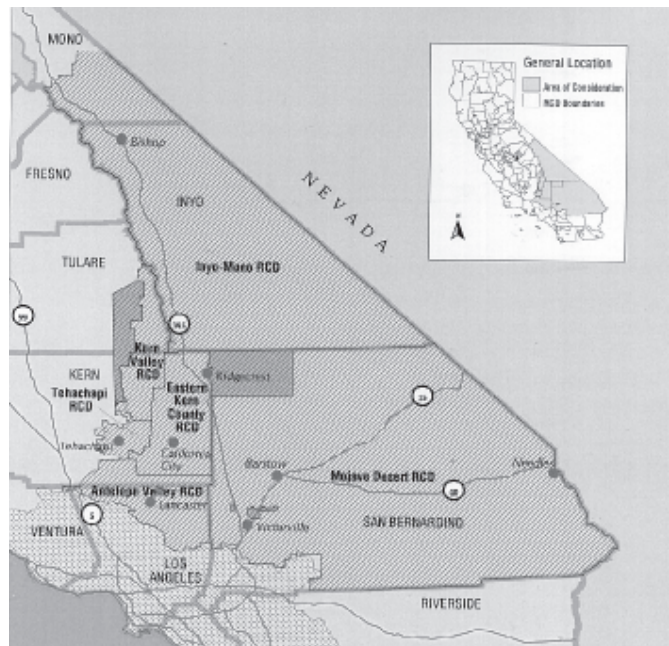
The group that submitted the application 30 years ago went by the wayside. It wasn't until five years ago that new interest developed, primarily by the Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District. However other RCD's and local groups lacked interest and the program went back into hibernation. The most recent and successful attempt for RC&D authorization started about two and half years ago.

This time there was strong interest and support from a broad range of county, municipal, and local community-based organizations for this program.



*Pete Lounsbury signing final authorization documentation.*

The newly authorized Mojave Desert-Mountain RC&D is one of the nations largest. It encompasses over 23 million acres of land and includes portions of six counties, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, San Bernardino, and Tulare. With this large area, come many diverse issues and concerns that the new RC&D Council needs to address. Some of the issues and/or



*Mojave Desert-Mountain RC&D is one of the largest if not the largest RC&D's encompassing over 23 million acres.*

concerns that the Council has already started work on are the control of invasive weeds, expansion of the EQIP program to our under served customers, facilitation between local groups seeking assistance for sewer system upgrades, and other economic challenges.

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# Farming Future Agriculturists for Conservation

By Paul Laustsen

High school students in the Riverside County FARMS (Farming Agriculture and Resource Management for Sustainability) Leadership Program are plowing through another year. The program, which extends from September to May, gives students a first hand experience in agriculture. Students have already toured many locations participating in activities such as mushroom cultivation, lettuce seeding, exotic plant removal, dairy operations and numerous other activities.

In the first FARMS excursion this year, RC&D Coordinator Ed Umbach, and Riverside County FARMS coordinator, Pedro Torres, brought students and teachers to the organic Cahuilla Mountain Farms. The students tried their hands at seeding lettuce, cultivating oyster mushrooms, and handling fruit and vegetables intended for a farmers' market. Cahuilla Mountain Farm owner and organic grower Paul Hartman, brother of former actor/comedian Phil Hartman, supports the FARMS



*Students from La Sierra High School are taught how to cultivate organic lettuce by Cahuilla Mountain Farm employee Larry Giles.*

program and believes it's an essential link for the children. "Agriculture has been taken for granted by many people to the point where city children don't even make the connection between the grocery store and the farm," says Hartman. "With this program, the children are not only eating the food, but they're actively planting the seed."

Other trips have included a dairy tour, a water reclamation facility and the historic Gilman Ranch in Banning, California. Here the young conservationists learned to identify exotic plant species and helped remove them. To reinforce the lesson, they replaced the habitat with native plant species.

The group of students who attend these trips has nearly doubled, reaching full capacity. "The success of the Cahuilla Farms visit sent a buzz around the high school campuses," said Torres. "The students are really getting into this program."

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## Flooding is History

by Paul Laustsen

Oxnard farmers no longer fear historic flooding of their high value crops and orchard land thanks to Public Law 566 (PL566) and local sponsor support. The Revolon-Beardsley Watershed Project, initiated under PL566, began over 40 years ago and has cost over \$50,000,000.

The project has installed 13 miles of concrete channel that diverts storm runoff away from homes and farmland into the ocean. According to District Conservationist Steve Jewett, the Oxnard area receives ten times the amount of storm runoff as it did when the project started, due to paved city streets and buildings.

Despite the environmental fragility of this watershed, funding has allowed only small sections of work to be done each year. Many communities have already reaped the benefits of the project, avoiding the frequent flooding from heavy rains. This is a benefit welcomed by local farmers, who grow about 2 1/2 crops a year.

Widespread support for the project came after a tour January 4th, where NRCS officials including State

Engineer Charles Davis and Assistant State Conservationist Paul Benedict, met with Congressman Elton Gallegly and representatives from the Flood Control District. The support comes at a good time



*Charles Davis (left) and John Tiedeman determine the best way to handle the paperwork.*

as work to complete the project is estimated to cost \$8 million. The last stretch of channel is expected to be finished within the next three years.

PL566, the Natural Resource Conservation Service program that provides funds for the projects, promotes better land use, reduces water resource problems, and improves quality of life for wildlife and humans.

The flood control project is co-sponsored by the Ventura County Flood Control District and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.



# Emergency Watershed Protection in Area IV

by Paul Laustsen

## The West Lake Incident

A fire in Thousand Oaks, started by young vandals, burned 600 acres on December 26, 2000. Although swift Santa Ana winds were blowing, fire-fighters managed to contain the fire, saving many multimillion dollar homes.



*Gerard Samulski surveys a toasted hillside with landowners.*

The West Lake Incident, referred to as an incident because of its size under 1000 acres, leaves more than charred hillsides in its wake. The loss of canopy and ground cover cause new potential problems for homeowners: mudslides and debris flows that could result from heavy winter rains. The debris flows can choke drainage ways and make the threat of flooding a very real one.

The Somis Field Office Emergency Watershed Protection crew responded to the scene to determine post-fire conditions and any hazards they may have caused to life or property. With access to federal funds, the NRCS has the ability to allocate monies toward rehabilitating areas in jeopardy after a natural disaster. Assessing the situation, District Conservationist Steve Jewett contacted the Homeowners Association and The Emmons Company (management of the North Ranch Country Club) who were unaware of the positive assistance options open to them. After a site visit with executive manager Gail Murphy, Jewett recommended landowners take immediate action on their own and place sandbags along their property to divert

runoff that might occur during heavy rains. A formal sponsor request for EWP assistance from both the City of Thousand Oaks and the Homeowners Association prompted the development of a Damage Survey Report and project agreement. In the report hydro-mulching and check dams were recommended to stabilize the barren slopes.

The Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency is the local lead agency, contracting the work to be performed. About two thirds of the land to be treated will be COSCA land and the other third is private. COSCA is also looking at long-term restoration of park land.

## EWP for Salton City

Kathleen O'Meara, engineer from the El Centro field office, has been working on an EWP project in Salton City. A 100-year storm last August, followed by a lesser September storm, left Salton City residents with big flooding problems. The storms



*Kathleen O'Meara providing protection*

caused a buildup of sediment in the Palm Corral Wash. The buildup, combined with heavy storm runoff, resulted in levee breaks and flooding of several homes through the middle of the city.

Approximately \$325,000 will be needed to clean out sediment from the channel and repair the levees that were destroyed as a result of the high

water and mud flows. "These people really need our help," says O'Meara, who is overseeing the project. "We're setting in motion the process to work with the city, clean up and repair the city's flood control system and, hopefully, do it before the next storm rolls in."

## King Fire EWP

The King Fire EWP team worked hard to stabilize slopes in the small



*Jae Lee inspects the placement of erosion control devices.*

community of Havilah in Kern County this past winter. The remote location was burned after lightning strikes ignited dry brush, leaving bare slopes that posed a potential threat to nearby Lake Isabella. Area Engineer Robert Miller, Bakersfield District Conservationist Jack Wright, and Tehachapi Soil Conservationist Jae Lee worked diligently to put local landowners at ease.

The work, which mostly entailed sandbagging and the placement of waddles, was designed to stop erosion on the steep slopes of King Canyon that eventually drain into Lake Isabella. This project didn't come without controversy. The project, which was originally slated to cost \$129,000, was slowed down by Kern County's inability to come up with the 25 percent cost share. Tulare County, who is directly affected by the sediment flows, decided to become the sponsor instead, after project leaders chopped the cost in half by eliminating certain practices.

# USDA Welcomes New Secretary

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## Ann M. Veneman

Secretary of Agriculture



Ann M. Veneman was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate and sworn in as the 27th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on January 20, 2001—a historical appointment of the first woman and only the second Californian to head the Department.

Secretary Veneman is no new comer to USDA, having served in three positions under the first Bush Administration: Veneman served as USDA Deputy Secretary from 1991 to 1993; as Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs and Commodity from 1989-91; and as Associate Administrator of Foreign Agriculture Service from 1986-89. She actively promoted open markets for agricultural products and was involved in the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, NAFTA, and the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement.

From 1995 to 1999, Veneman served as Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), where she pioneered programs and partnerships to enhance food safety, pest and disease prevention, and agriculture education. And again at CDFA she made expanding global opportunities for California agriculture a top priority.

Secretary Veneman, an attorney, was raised on a peach farm in Modesto. She earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California at Davis, a master's degree in public policy from the University of California at Berkeley, and a juris doctorate degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law.

### Local Reflections

*"I had the honor of providing Ann a personal tour of the of the new USDA Modesto Service Center during the Grand Opening Ceremonies 2 years ago while Ann was the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture.*

*Ann commented that this Agricultural Center exceeded her USDA goals to bring agencies together to better serve farmers and ranchers."*

Mike McElhiney, Modesto Field Office

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### The Apricot Lady

Joyce Barfuss, West Stanislaus Resource Conservation District Director (now retired) and nationally know as "The Apricot Lady" just received a big thanks from Ann regarding a "congratulations gift" of Apricot Jelly Beans presented in Washington DC recently.

Joyce and Ann have been good friends for many years through the *California Women for Agriculture* and the *Close Up Foundation*.

# Dignitaries from Africa Visit Modesto

by Jolene Lau

NRCS District Conservationist Mike McElhiney and Lockeford Plant Materials Manager Dave Dyer recently assisted as “international conservation ambassadors” to four notable officials from Ethiopia. Officials included Dr. Aseffa Abreha, Minister (Prime Minister’s Office) and General Manager, Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation and Development Fund (poverty Alleviation); Dr. Getachew Tikubet, General Manager of Addis Ababa Bio/Farm and Regional Representative of International Center for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), Addis Ababa and Adjunct Professor of Biological Sciences, CSU, Stanislaus, Turlock; Dr. Hans Herren, Director General of ICIPE, Nairobi; and Dr. Johann Baumgartner, Director of Population Ecology and Ecosystems Science, ICIPE, Nairobi.

They presented an overview of USDA conservation partnerships, soil erosion and water infiltration techniques, plant screening, agroforestry and crop rotation. The officials are seeking collaborations and partnerships through the California State University Stanislaus Bio-Ag program to alleviate persistent natural resource concerns in their coun-

try. With more than 58,000,000 people, Ethiopia is in northeastern Africa bordering Sudan, Somalia, and Kenya.



## Supporting Agriculture on the Urban Edge

by Terry Huff

What does the Sierra Club, the business community, environmental organizations, and the local Resource Conservation District have in common? Everything according to a recent workshop presented by the Alameda County RCD and the Tri-Valley Business Council Vision 2010 project.

The workshop, designed to discuss and present issues important to the agricultural community, was presented to farmers, ranchers, elected representatives, environmentalists and governmental agencies.

The workshop, one of a series, is the culmination of a year long effort by the Tri-Valley Business Council and local agriculturalists to develop an Agricultural Enterprise Plan that will support agricultural operations in the region. In meetings held each Tuesday

over a six-month period, facilitated by NRCS District Conservationist Terry Huff, the agriculturalists developed their vision for the region, identified the barriers to that vision and the opportunities available to address these barriers. “In order to develop an effective agricultural enterprise plan and complete this vision, the agricultural community recognizes the need for more collaborative discussions with regulatory agencies, governmental representatives and the business community” said Huff. The agricultural community is taking the leadership role on addressing their agricultural issues including the more controversial issue of open space. “The concept of a multiple use landscape, entitled Working Landscapes, will be the basis for the enterprise plan, and we hope this framework which includes funded “open space” options will provide the landowners with enough flexibility to address their needs” Huff added.



# Cal-Poly Outreach Continues

by Paul Laustsen

What is the best way for the NRCS to attract a diverse work force? Mon Yee, NRCS Liaison stationed at Cal-Poly University, will be quick to answer your question; recruit at a leading agricultural college campus where nearly 70% of its students are minorities.

And for the last few years, that is exactly what Mon Yee has been doing; working with students and faculty at the California State Polytechnic University at Pomona with great success. While attracting students to careers with the USDA, Yee also stimulates faculty members with ideas and guidance from his experienced past.



*Mon Yee(right) with student recruits Brian Takemoto, Glenn De Claro, and Linh Dang.*

Over the last 20 years, Dr. Mon Yee has worked with virtually every level of the NRCS. Beginning in 1981, Yee worked as a Soil Scientist and GIS specialist for the regional office in Portland, Oregon. In 1990 he took the job as National Hydric Soil Scientist for the National Wetland Staff in Washington, D.C. Then in 1994, Yee moved on to be Assistant State Conservationist of Oregon where he served until taking his present position as Liaison Officer at Cal-Poly Pomona.

These experiences alone would qualify Yee as an excellent mentor and recruiter, but the list of his professional career goes on. Mon Yee has taken many national details and served on key task forces, including a year assignment at the White House in 1993, where he briefed Vice President Gore and his staff on reinvention issues.

Now, with all this experience under his belt, Yee goes to work with the intention of carrying out the agency mission by insuring young conservationists find their way to career possibilities with the USDA. Dr. Mon Yee understands the importance of recruiting new blood into an aging agency, but admits it is not easy.

“Student’s often shy away from government service because wages are not competitive with the private sector.” Yee explains. “It is a challenge to hold onto a talented scientist when a cooperation is waving dollars and benefits in their face.”

Despite the competitive recruiting market, Yee knows that the government has much to offer the college graduate and intends on continuing his efforts to hand pick students that will benefit the agencies mission. And Cal Poly, currently constructing a 47 acre educational agricultural center, proves itself as being the perfect place to recruit.

With the combination of an ideal recruitment area and an ideal recruiter, we are sure to see the fruits of NRCS labor springing up as SCEPS around California. If you have any questions about the NRCS liaison program, call Dr. Mon Yee at his Cal Poly office. (909) 869-2191



*Cal Poly Pomona, College of Agriculture’s Associate Dean Dr. John Trei(left), Dean Dr. Wayne Bidlack (center) and Mon Yee.*

# Caligrams...

## Water Quality Assistance to Lone Pine and Bishop Tribes

***By Mark Davis, District Conservationist, Bishop Field Office***

The Bishop Field Office and Owens Valley Indian Water Commission (OVIWC) is working with the Bishop and Lone Pine Tribes to monitor water quality and usage.



*Mark Davis does more than breathe fresh air.*

Mark Davis (District Conservationist, Bishop Field Office) and Jon Whan (Bakersfield Engineer) helped develop devices and locations for irrigation tail water monitoring from the tribal land.

The joint project with OVIWC determines how much water is being lost by the reservations and measures the quality of that which is recycled. This testing will help Davis and Whan re-design the Lone Pine Tribe's irrigation system. The system upgrade

is expected to be an ongoing project, divided into manageable pieces and completed as funding opportunities become available.

## Hats Off to Trainer & Trainees

***By Jolene Lau, Area Public Affairs Specialist, Salinas***

Most of you already know the lady behind the renowned greeting heard when you call the Salinas Area Office. If not, let me introduce you to Julie Irinco, Area 2's Administrative Coordinator who also pleasantly trained employees on CPR and First Aid.

As a certified trainer by the American Red Cross, Julie educated 32 NRCS employees and conservation partners including Farm Services Agency, Rural Development, and members from the Resource Conservation District on CPR and First Aid. After successfully passing the exam, CPR participants received one-year certification and first aid participants received three-year certification by the American Red Cross.



*Julie Irinco and Pat Kelly*

Four sessions in Salinas and King City were held with the help of Pat Kelly, our office automation assistant (the other pleasant greeting when you call). Julie has been a volunteer trainer for the American Red Cross and provided CPR and first aid training for NRCS and others since 1996.


***By Jim Earsom, District Conservationist, Redlands***

Construction on an artificial wetland in the Chino Basin to treat dairy run-off began this last October.

Technical assistance was provided to the Orange County Water District (OCWD) in designing a system that uses natural biological processes to clean dairy wash water that contains salts, nitrates, pathogens, pharmaceuticals, and endocrine disrupting chemicals. The project stems from a 310 EPA grant that the Inland Empire RCD obtained, and the OCWD is managing.

The wetland is located on a 53-acre dairy with 850 cows in the Chino Basin. The dairy generates 65,000 gallons of wash water per day that is run into the wetland.

In the Chino Basin, 270 dairies with 330,000 cows generate more than 15 million gallons of contaminated wash water each day. By reducing the contaminants, dairies would make water available for on site reuse and greatly improve the water quality of that which percolates into the ground.

Partners on the project include Cooperative Extension, ARS, Air Quality Management District, water districts, and the dairy industry.

## Soil Scientists Work the CalaverasGROWN

***By Kerry Arroues, Soil Scientist, CA***

One of the first crews on site, NRCS Soil Scientists, Kerry Arroues and John Rule, set up a booth early Saturday morning, Feb. 17, 2001, in the gymnasium of the Toyon Middle School. Farmers, business leaders and government officials of Calaveras County have formed a powerful coalition organization called CalaverasGROWN to develop markets, enhance agricultural production and bolster community viability. The conference drew many curious visitors. Of the many different colorful booths, one had live birds including roosters competing with one another for “crowing” awards, thus, lending a distinct Ag flavor to the proceedings.

Soil Scientists hope to provide Calaveras County with a modern soil survey to be used as a vital tool for healthy growth. Now these same industrious Calaveras County folks are beginning to learn that NRCS shares their vision for a healthy Ag economy.




## Soil Surveys to Benefit National Parks

***by Peter Fahnestock, Soil Survey Project Leader, Apple Valley***

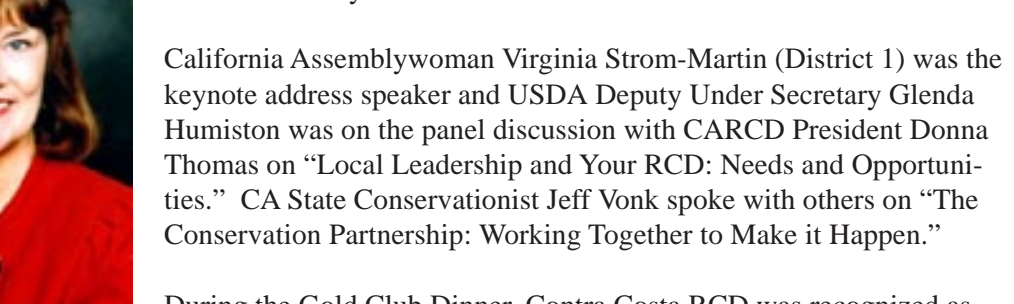
Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Parks have joined a list of Parks in California including Yosemite and Channel Islands that have an ongoing soil survey. Park planners will use the soil survey to assist in the management and protection of fragile desert environments. Some of the issues the survey will help address are erosion from trails and roads, degradation of native environments surrounding campgrounds, loss of native vegetation from fire and air pollution, invasion of exotic plants and grasses and management of wildlife habitat.

The Parks first need an inventory of their soil resources to effectively manage the land in their care. Soil Scientists are using a variety of traditional and nontraditional means to map the nearly 800,000 acres of Joshua Tree and 3.1 million acres of Death Valley in a timely fashion. As most of the parks' lands are designated Wilderness Areas, soil scientists Peter Fahnstock, Carrie-Ann Haydu, and Leon Lato and range ecologist Patti Novak-Echenique, are limited in their mapping efforts to distances they can travel on foot from available roads. With a mandate to finish the surveys in a reasonable amount of time, alternate methods to map the inaccessible areas are needed. One way is to use existing mapping coverages with a Geographical Information System (GIS) to help locate areas with a user defined set of variables. This can help identify areas with soils that have been formed under similar conditions of climate and geology and are on corresponding landforms, elevations and aspects and have the same ecological site. NRCS has hired Russell Almaraz, a GIS specialist, based at the Lancaster Service Center, to assist in this effort.

## CARCD Holds Annual Meeting in San Jose

*By Jolene Lau, PAS, Salinas AO*

The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts held their 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting & Conference November 9-12<sup>th</sup> in San Jose with over 200 district directors participating. As part of the opening remarks, NRCS provided “CARCD Diversity in the Bay Delta” to highlight projects of the 13 RCDs in the Bay Delta area.



*nia Strom-Martin* During the Gold Club Dinner, Contra Costa RCD was recognized as

one of seven RCDs up for the 1999 National Grand Award Districts.

President Tom Brumleve will be receiving this award in Washington, DC in March. Congratulations!

# PERSONNEL CHANGES

10/03/00

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Thompson, L.	Ag Engineer	Promotion	GS-11	Willows	10/08/00
Martynn, D.	District Cons	Promotion-Career	GS-12	Colusa	10/22/00
White, R.	Geologist	Reassignment	GS-12	New Mexico	10/27/00
Robledo, D.	Area Eng	Promotion	GS-12	Salinas AO	11/05/00
Liu, S.	Soil Scientist	Reassignment-NV	GS-09	Arcata SSO	11/05/00
Smith, C.	Ag Engineer	New Hire	GS-07	Escondido	11/05/00
Hansen, J.	Computer Spec	Reassignment	GS-11	Fresno AO	11/05/00
De Claro, G.	St Tr Soil Cons	Hire-SCEP	GS-03	Riverside RC&D	11/19/00
Tran, Q.	Ag Engineer	Resignation	GS-09	Modesto	12/02/00
Jaouen, S.	Range Cons	New Hire	GS-07	Woodland	12/03/00
Rolewicz, D.	Acct Tech	Promotion	GS-08	Davis SO	12/03/00
Muehlberg, C.	Budget Analyst	Reassignment	GS-11	Davis SO	12/17/00
Peltier, C.	St Tr Engineer	Hire-SCEP	GS-04	Eureka	12/17/00
Hernandez, O.	RC&D Coord.	Retirement	GS-12	Jackson RC&D	12/30/00
Schilder, L.	Engineer	Retirement	GS-11	Auburn	12/30/00
Bastone, A.	Ag Engineer	New Hire	GS-09	Livermore	12/31/00
Buban, D.	St Tr Engineer	Hire-SCEP	GS-04	Santa Maria	01/03/01
Hansen, A.	St Tr Soil Cons	Hire-SCEP	GS-04	Arcata	01/08/01
Benitez, L.	St Tr Soil Sci	Hire-SCEP	GS-04	Templeton	01/14/01
White, J.	Ag Engineer	Resignation	GS-09	Davis SO	01/15/01
Laustsen, P.	Public Aff Spec	Promotion	GS-09	Riverside AO	01/28/01
Champion, B.	Soil Cons Tech	Reassignment	GS-08	Fresno FO	02/01/01
Talbot, C.	Range Cons	Promotion/Transfer	GS-13	Nebraska	02/11/01
Nielsen, J.	Pers Mgt Spec	Promotion-Career	GS-09	Davis SO	02/25/01
Ellis, A.	St Tr Soil Cons	Hire-SCEP	GS-03	San Jacinto	02/25/01
Pellersels, B.	Soil Cons Tech	Reassignment	GS-09	Nevada	02/25/01
Rocha, A.	St Tr Soil Cons	Promotion	GS-07	Fresno	03/11/01
Jay, J.	Supply Clerk	Transfer to BOR	GS-05	Sacramento	03/11/01
Lambert, C.	Project Coord	New Hire	GS-11	Salinas	03/11/01
Jimenez, N.	Range Cons	Transfer	GS-07	Willows	03/25/01
Lindsay, C.	Forester	Reassignment	GS-07	Jackson	03/25/01

# National Effort Culminates in Streamlined Service Centers

*by Mike House*

On January 8<sup>th</sup> Elk Grove SC welcomed visitors Bruce Kreller, National Service Center Director, and Shirley Hall, Pilot Site Coordinator, from the department's National Food and Agriculture Council (FAC), for an award ceremony. The event marked the test phase completion for the Service Center Modernization Initiative. Elk Grove piloted the program for California and portions of other western states. Here are some pictures of the people awarded at the ceremony.

*Pictured left to right are Director Bruce Kreller, FSA Co-director Nicole Bell, RD Manager Dave Sander, and NRCS' own Surjit Toor.*



*Pictured left to right are Director Bruce Kreller with Mark Parson, Wayne Sheldon, and Karen Fullen*



*Pictured left to right are Director Bruce Kreller with Surjit Toor, Teresa Velasquez, and Christian Davis.*

## CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

### *California*

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Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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